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AUTHOR Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove; Toukomaa, Pertti

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ABSTRACT

Immigrant education and Language Shelter programs for Finnish speakers living in Sweden are discussed in answer to Cora Brent-Palmer's criticism that a middle class bias exists in the Swedish educational system. She claims that the system operates against the academic opportunities and employment success of Finnish immigrants. However, it is argued that Language Shelter programs have as their goals assimilation of the second language speakers and the elimination of semilingualism. In these programs, instruction is mainly in Finnish with Swedish as a Second Language (SSE) from grade 3 on. Thus, instruction in Finnish to Finish speakers promotes linguistic competence in the first language (L1) while SSE leads to proficiency in Swedish. A large-scale longitudinal study proves: (1) that Finnish immigrant children at the end of grade 6 after a Language Shelter program do just as well as Finnish children in Finland on all language tests; (2) that they do just as well as Swedish children in tests of listening and reading comprehension and oral production in Swedish; and (3) that they write in Swedish almost at grade level, with some minor difficulties in spelling and punctuation. Their school achievement in academic subjects is also at grade level. (PMJ)

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SEMILINGUALISM AND MIDDLE CLASS BIAS: A reply to Cora Brent-Palmer

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas
Finnish Academy

Pertti Toukomaa
University of Tampere

In an article entitled "A sociolinguistic assessment of the notion 'im/migrant semilingualism' from a social conflict perspective" in Working Papers on Bilingualism, No. 17, Cora Brent-Palmer (CBP) discusses our reports for Unesco (Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa 1976, Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas 1977). She concludes that the semilingual notion and the proposal for bilingual education which we make (namely, language shelter programs consisting of education through the medium of the mother tongue for immigrant children at least during the primary school years, with instruction in the majority language as a second language) may be expressions of a middle class bias which does not reflect lower class realities. Instead of accepting the notion of semilingualism, she claims that the low test scores of the Finnish immigrant children in Sweden and their poor school achievement can be accounted for by a sociolinguistic mismatch between the home language culture and the standardized test instrument, and a restrictive communicative style which reflects the minority child's subordinate status.

We think that the article reflects in a dramatic way the difficulties and the need for extreme cautiousness when trying to apply sociolinguistic theories in different societies. We agree to a certain extent with CBP on some of the principles which she presents in her article -- something that CBP should have noticed had she read our reports and some of our more recent publications carefully. But what is true for Black children or Mexican American children as far as material standard or linguistic-cultural behavior is concerned is not necessarily true for immigrant working class children in Scandinavia. It is important to note that Finland, even if it is an emigration country, is highly industrialized, with a GNP that is among the highest in the world. It is a country where, for example, social security is dramatically higher than in the US, and where all adults (except for a tiny number of Gypsies, maybe 1000 people) are literate. Questions such as "How many lower-class children have access to toy cubes?" (CBP, p.161) are simply irrelevant. In Finland, especially lower-class urban children do, since they have priority in getting into the day care centers, the standard of which is very high, materially and otherwise. Since Finland has the highest percentage of women in Europe (outside the socialist countries) gainfully employed, many children receive their day care outside home.

The Semilingual Notion

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In order to be able to accuse us of "a theoretical orientation which deemphasizes societal factors" (p. 141) CBP must have ignored the theoretical parts of our reports completely. Our orientation is well reflected for instance in the title of an article by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (TSK) (1978a): "Semilingualism and the education of migrant children as a means of reproducing the caste of assembly line workers". Since our views on semilingualism can be judged from the article, we quote:

Working Papers on Bilingualism, No. 19.

> Semilingualism... is an old notion, even if this name has not always been used. It was for instance observed in the beginning of the century in North American settings, where many Indians were said to forget their mother tongues faster than they learned English (see Bloomfield's description of White-Thunder, and Christina Bratt Paulston's (1975, 27-31) comments). Semilingualism means not knowing any language properly (Hansegard 1968) at the same level as monolingual native speakers (Paneldiskussion om dubbel halvspråkighet 1977), or, put more precisely, a situation where a child does not acquire the linguistic skill appropriate to her/his original linguistic capacity in any language (Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa 1976).

When CBP claims that we "define semilingualism as a low level of competence in the minority L1" (p. 140), that is a complete mistake. A Finnish child in Sweden who can function in either Finnish or Swedish on the same level as a corresponding monolingual child (N.B., a working class child, since the corresponding native speaker is of course matched with regard to SES, among other factors) is not semilingual!

> Many of those who have never met semilingual children, suspect that semilingualism is a fiction. The notion of semilingualism seems to imply a notion of deficit, which is very difficult to accept from a research point of view. It is easy even for progressive researchers to wave it away and say that it must be a similar middle-class biased construction as the so called linguistic deprivation of Black or working class children. Again a new type of deficit theory, based on using middle-class monolingual ethnocentric norms, and forcing them on working class bilingual children, thus labeling them as deficient, or at least deviant. - This is an intellectually very appealing approach, and I sure wish we could skip the whole problem by explaining it as a monolingual ethnocentric middle class bias, even if the consequences of semilingualism for school achievement and job opportunities are disastrous. But it doesn't seem to me to work. The problem exists, even when I try to look at it with all possibilities for biases in mind. Ulrich Ammon has suggested that it is only natural that economic oppression is reflected in language, too (1973). Semilingualism should not, then, be viewed as a characteristic inherent in the children themselves, but as a reflection of the powerless situation in which they get their linguistic education at school. It functions as a way of transferring the deficits of the school system so that they are seen as deficits in the individual children (Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa 1976, Skutnabb-Kangas 1977a). As soon as the minority gets control over its own educational situation, semilingualism can also be cured, as we can see in Sweden for instance from the experience with the mother tongue pre school classes, where immigrant children get as good results on language tests as monolinguals (Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas 1977)
>
> Skutnabb-Kangas 1978a, 222-223.

> One of the main goals of school is to function as a selective instrument. Semilingualism, produced by the institutional organization of the minority child's environment, among others the educational system, which operates on the majority terms to ensure the continuation of the present power relationships and the division of labour, sees to it that the minority children are neatly sorted out from the educational system and the decision making positions at an early stage. But the one that under present circumstances is blamed for the poor educational

> achievement and the dropping-out from the system, is not the system, but every individual child. The child is made into the scapegoat: attempts are made to change the child in such a way that it adapts to the social situation in a majority language environment in the school and in the entire educational system, instead of changing the situations, the system, to adapt to and start from the communicative experiences and the command of the language of communication that the minority child possesses when coming to day care/pre-school/school. This is working with a deficit-model, where the point of departure is the middle-class monolingual majority-language norm, and where it is assumed that minority language children have deficits which prevent them from profiting by the education, and which the majority society wants to compensate for. As in the Head Start programs, also the immigrant children for instance in Sweden have a priority to get into pre-school classes. Their inability to speak Swedish is regarded as a deficit in the children to be compensated for through early instruction in the Swedish language.
>
> In the compensatory model of the other type, the difference model, it is explained that the "handicapped" minority child is as good as the majority child, but different. But also in this model, "different" is often interpreted as "worse", because the norm against which the child is found to be different, is that of the majority child. One never says that the "handicapped" child would constitute the norm and that the majority child would be the deviant, different child. The frame of reference is invariably the existing school and the child that manages in it. Viewed from this perspective the school becomes for the children belonging to the linguistic majority an extension of the home, a place where their own culture and their own language are constantly being strengthened, whereas for immigrant children (and, of course, also for lower class majority children) it is a place where neither their language nor culture exist, possibly where they are not even accepted, a place where their social identity is questionaed and undermined, a place where they ought to abandon their language and their norms to get by, and instead learn to adopt the language usage, norms and values of the (middle class) linguistic majority.
>
> Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas 1977, 19-20.
>
> A real equality would presuppose a school taking the possibilities of the individual child as the starting point and accepting each child on the child's own terms. Instead of neglecting what the child already has when she/he comes to the school, one ought to build further on this basis, use it as a foundation for the new experiences that the school will give the child.
>
> Skutnabb-Kangas 1978a, 233-234.

If this type of reasoning, or the political consequences of the present immigrant education for Europe which TSK has discussed (Skutnabb-Kangas 1978a, b, 1979, Haberland & Skutnabb-Kangas 1979) -- including the growing violence and the possibilities for the growth of anti-democratic movements --, represents an "almost total focus on linguistic competence (which) leads them to ignore other sociopolitical issues of im/migration" (CBP, p. 168), or "emphasis on the linguistic antecedents... based on a theoretical orientation which deem-

phasizes societal factors" (CBP, p. 141), then we would like to see the sociolinguistic research which does emphasize societal factors. We think CBP's claims do not do justice to what we think we have done. We hope that the same type of misunderstanding (and not something else) also accounts for the fact that we are blamed for things which we have never said (for instance that "semilingualism... promotes cognitive deficiency" (CBP, p. 140), or "monoliterate (i.e. oral only) transitional programs for minority children automatically (our emphasis) result in low proficiency in the L1, and future school failure in the majority L" (CBP, p. 138), and several others).

The Finnish Immigrants in Sweden

Next we would like to give a short description of the Finnish immigrant population in Sweden, especially their language, because their situation differs in many ways from both immigrant and indigenous minorities in North America, for instance.

Sweden has approximately 1.1 million inhabitants of immigrant background, out of a total population of about 8 million. Almost half of the immigrants are Finns. The large immigration waves came around 1969-72. The Finnish group is typically working class. Even if the education of those who came before 1972 is lower than that of Swedes (in 1972 only 1.2% of the Finnish men and 3.3% of the women had education above the gymnasium level, i.e. more than 12 years, compared to 7.9% of the Swedish men and 9.5% of the Swedish women), the Finnish migrants still are very well educated compared with all other labour emigration countries in the world - there are no illiterates (except for the Gypsies) and all adults have at least 8 years of basic education. Since 1972, many skilled workers and white collar workers (technicians, nurses, etc.) have also emigrated, but the Finnish population in Sweden is still overwhelmingly working class. The immigrants in Sweden are better organized than anywhere else in the world, both in trade unions and in their own national organizations. The National Union of Finnish Associations in Sweden has close to 200 local branches, with more than 140 000 members. More than 20 immigrant groups have their own National Unions, and these Unions play an important role trying to influence decisions concerning their own situation. The immigrants can vote in municipal elections, and they are eligible to be elected. All immigrants in the labour force who do not know Swedish are entitled to 240 hours of tuition in Swedish as a foreign language, during paid working hours.

The Finnish migration is a labour migration, and usually the whole family moves. When asked about intent to stay, approximately 25-30% of the Finnish immigrants definitely want to stay, another 25-30% definitely intend to go back, and 40-50% do not know. Most Finns have a very intense contact with Finland, many of them still have a house in Finland, and it is commonplace to go home at least during the summer vacations, but often several times a year (the ferries between Finland and Sweden cost only a few dollars). The Finnish-language infrastructure in Sweden is very well developed: there are Finnish dailies and weeklies published in Sweden, many immigrants get both national and local newspapers from Finland, it is easy to get books from Finland, and Finnish books are also published in Sweden. There are radio and TV programs in Finnish, partly produced in Sweden,

partly in Finland. In addition, there are many different types of cultural activities in Finnish (the amateur theater tradition, for example, is well established among the working class population in Finland and it, too, has been carried on in Sweden). There is a language planning body for the Finnish language, working in close cooperation with its counterpart in Finland and with Swedish -speaking counterparts both in Sweden and in Finland (the latter for the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland). There are numerous different exchange programs between Finland and Sweden, and the governments have many bilateral agreements about cultural exchange and cooperation.

The adults who have received their basic education in Finland and whose Finnish language competence is of course at the same level as that of Finns living in Finland, do have fairly good possibilities for maintaining their linguistic competence in the mother tongue, compared with other immigrant groups in the world. Even though some lexical interference is of course present, no contact varieties of Finnish, comparable to those of older Finnish immigrants in the US, have developed in Sweden. Partly this can be explained by the fact that the large scale immigration is a very recent phenomenon, partly by the fact that Finland is so close to Sweden and the infra-structure and the cultural activities for adults are quite well developed. Fairly few Finns use Swedish at home, even if it is the prestige language (CBP, p. 147). Most of those who do, do so because Swedish teachers, medical doctors, etc. have told them to in order to "help" the children to learn Swedish (and some researchers still suggest that parents of pre-school children speak Swedish to their children, even if they do not know it well - for instance Lars Henric Ekstrand), but nowadays most Finnish parents are too well informed about the importance of the mother tongue to believe "authorities", should they come up with such suggestions. Some parents also have to switch over to speaking Swedish with the children, because they answer in Swedish when the parents speak Finnish.

Dialectal variation in the Finnish language is fairly small: no one dialect is incomprehensible for other groups, not even for children. Social variation also seems to be fairly small compared with most other languages studied so far, judging from the results of the first large scale studies on oral language in urban (both monolingual and bilingual) settings. The standard written language, as it was developed in the 17th century, draws heavily on both eastern and western Finnish dialects, and it does not seem to cause any problems for children coming to school, because all children are familiar with it by then, at least from TV and adult speech. CBP thinks that the "confused Finnish" of the migrant children reported by us (we haven't called it confused, by the way) "could be a contact-dialect which has been judged by the idealized norms of standard Finnish" (p. 150), a contact-dialect, which "for all practical purposes... is often incomprehensible to standard speakers of the language". This simply isn't true for the Finns. None of us has ever met a Finnish immigrant in Sweden (neither child nor adult) whose language we would not have understood "perfectly".

Immigrant Education and the Language Shelter Programs

Of the pupils in the Swedish comprehensive school (grades 1-9), 8.5%, or 88,300, were immigrants in 1977/78. According to the teachers' estimates, 38,700, or 44% of them, needed some kind of auxiliary tuition. A total of 27,800 participated in auxiliary tuition in the Swedish language or in other subjects through the medium of Swedish; 14,100 had auxiliary instruction in other subjects through the medium of their mother tongue, and 35,900 pupils had mother tongue instruction. Four thousand pupils wanted to have mother tongue instruction without getting it, although it is obligatory for the municipalities to organize such instruction if the children or their parents want it.

It seems to be a very complicated matter to try to find out why some groups manage at school better than others. CBP operates with a model in which the power relationships of the society and the SES of the children directly cause the poor school achievement, even if the interactional patterns seem to mediate the influence. We think that this is too simple. We see the linguistic competence in both languages as one of the mediating variables, which in turn, together with other factors, determines the range of possible interactional situations, and, of course, also partly how much the child can benefit from these interactional situations, given the patterns which they take. The need for auxiliary tuition for the different groups in Sweden varies a great deal: according to the teachers' estimates, 73% of the Arabic-L1-children needed it, compared to 95% of the children with Assyrian languages, 44% Danish, 41% English, 11% Estonian, 55% Finnish, 28% French, 63% Greek, 23% Dutch, 65% Icelandic, 33% Italian, 31% Norwegian, 64% Spanish, 86% Turkish, 35% Hungarian etc., and 14% of the immigrant children with Swedish as their home language. From the need for auxiliary tuition we can (allowing for the teachers' prejudices towards the different groups) see something of the relative school achievement of the different groups - and there seems to be fairly complicated interrelationship between the different factors: length of stay (Assyrians are a recent group, while Estonians are an old group having arrived in 1944-46), reason for immigration ("guest workers" or refugees), intent to stay, education, social status, cultural distance from the Swedish main stream culture, linguistic distance from the Swedish language, the size of the group, its concentration in certain geographical areas, etc. It would be misleading to claim, for instance, that class status alone is a decisive factor. Besides we cannot accept a model where societal-structural factors directly influence behavior at the individual level; they are mediated by other factors, one of which is the level of bilingual competence (as it is developed for instance in the threshold hypothesis in Cummins 1976, 1979a, 1979b and in Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas 1977).

CBP seems to think that Language Shelter Programs grew out of some research findings, based on language tests (p. 137, 139). Quite the contrary, they grew out of a practical need and practical experiences, the same way as the Navajo programs in Rock Point (see Vorih & Rosier 1978 and Troike 1979). The children were not doing well, regardless of the amount of SSL (Swedish as a second language) teaching they were getting. The first Language Shelter classes were set up in Gothenburg in 1970, and now there are more than 300 of them, in different

languages (some 200 in Finnish). The gains seem above all to be affective: the children are open, happy, self-reliant. But they also become bilingual and do well at school. The parents and the teachers give their full support to these classes, contrary to what CBP believes ("Since the majority of im/migrant parents may support a limited (our emphasis) use of the mother tongue in education, a program with some type of transitional format may be the most socially realistic one" (CBP, p. 164), and contrary to her opinion of these programs as not "educationally feasible and socially rewarding for the lower classes" (p. 165). In most cases the parents and teachers have been the initiators of the programs, and they have often had to fight the Swedish school authorities to get them -- and still do. For instance, the first proposal to continue Finnish-medium education through grades 7-9 (in Rinkeby, a Stockholm suburb and one of the areas with most immigrants in Sweden) has come exclusively from the parents of a class of students who are starting grade 6 in August 1979. It is also worthwhile noting that *All* the immigrant organizations with national Unions, representing the large immigrant groups in Sweden (except the Estonians, who already have two Estonian-medium schools) *WANT TO HAVE THEIR CHILDREN INSTRUCTED THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE MOTHER TONGUE,* and they also want the mother tongue to have equal status in school with the mother tongue of the Swedish children. Even if we see that CBP's claim concerning the lack of official recognition has hitherto been true, we don't see why it could not be changed if the immigrant organizations are strong enough; it is not necessary to accept the status quo: "In receiving countries, the language of voluntary im/migrants rarely if ever, receives official recognition" (CBP, p. 143). By calling immigrants "voluntary", CBP seems to disregard the economic reasons for migration, which for most Finns are the main reasons; they are not in Sweden "voluntarily".

If middle class bias, both in test construction and in judging the language of the children, could explain semilingualism, then the same bias would show also when judging children in Language Shelter programs. These children are still working class and live in the same environment as all the other immigrant children (for instance, in the nursery school classes, which Pertti Toukomaa studied in our second report, one of the criteria for determining which children were to be included in the nursery classes was very poor socioeconomic background). Yet these nursery school children (see also Toukomaa 1979) obtained results both on the Breuer-Weuffen sensory-motor test and on the Finnish version of ITPA (Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities), which were comparable to those obtained by monolingual children at the lowest socioeconomic level in Finland (and on some subtests the immigrant children even did better than the monolinguals). It shows, to us, that it is perfectly possible for low-SES immigrant children to manage as well as monolingual children if the "instruction" is given through the medium of the mother tongue. Neither can middle class bias account for the fact that the 6:4 (=6 years 4 months) year old immigrants in Swedish-medium pre-schools (with lots of toy cubes) were so much worse than their counterparts in Finland. And especially middle class bias cannot account for the fact that those immigrants who earlier had attended the Finnish-medium nursery school and by the time of the testing were attending a nationally homogenous pre-school with a Finnish-speaking aide, but with a monolingual Swedish-speaking teacher, did not at the age of 6:9 do as well as the 5:7 year old Finnish-medium nursery school children (see Table 1).

Table 1

Psycholinguistic ages of Finnish immigrant children, ITPA

	S W E D E N					F I N L A N D			
	Finnish medium nursery school		Finnish pre-school with Finnish aide + Swedish teacher		Swedish medium pre-school	Lowest socioeconomic status			
			F-m	S-m or no nursery earlier					
real age	4,9	5,7	6,9	6,7	6,4	4,7	5,7	6,1	7,2
Auditory reception	4,8	5,4	4,9	4,10	4,7	4,5	4,11	4,11	6,7
Auditory association	3,11	5,1	5,1	4,10	4,5	4,5	5,2	5,6	6,6
Verbal expression	4,6	4,11	4,11	4,4	4,1	4,6	5,3	5,3	6,10
Grammatic closure	-	-	5,3	4,11	4,11	-	-	5,7	7,1
N	12	10	12	45	10	49	36	20	25

The results in our reports concerning the language of immigrant children are supported by similar results not only with other Finnish children in Sweden (Kuusinen, Lasonen & Särkelä 1976, 1977, Hjelm 1972, Lasonen 1978a, 1978b, Lasonen & Toukomaa 1978, Arwidsson 1977, 1978) but with other immigrant groups both in Sweden and the rest of the Scandinavia, and elsewhere (Cummins 1979, Fidef Yayinlari -5, Invandrerrapport 1978, Kjellenberg et al. 1975, Klassekampen; Fremmedarbejderutgave 1978, Kuusela 1973, Meyer-Ingwersen et al. 1977, Mitteilungen 1973, Skutnabb-Kangas 1979, Stölting 1978, Takač 1978). And the empirical evidence for the good results in curing semilingualism is also starting to accumulate. A large-scale longitudinal study in Södertälje (led by a Swedish psychologist, Göte Hanson), shows (a) that Finnish immigrant children at the end of grade 6 after a Language Shelter program (instruction mostly through the medium of Finnish, with SSL from grade 3 on) do just as well as Finnish children in Finland on all language tests, (b) that they do just as well as Swedish children in tests of listening and reading comprehension and oral production in Swedish, and (c) that they write in Swedish almost at grade level, with some minor difficulties in spelling and punctuation. Their school achievement is also at grade level (preliminary results, both interviews and personal communication with Göte Hanson). There have been, until now, fairly few well controlled longitudinal studies (see Troike 1979), but preliminary results from several ongoing studies seem to support the good results (Appel 1979, Arwidsson 1977, 1978, Gustavsen 1979, Mosnikoff 1977, Hébert et al. 1976, Cummins 1979b, Troike 1979). In addition to such "operationalizable" evidence we have practical experience, as shown in numerous resolutions of, as well as interviews with, and articles about and by, parents, teachers and the children themselves in Scandinavia, whose testimony we think is at least as important as all the research evidence.

Instruments Used in Our Research

Let us consider briefly the tests we have used. Our primary aim has not been test construction, nor in this research has it been to determine exactly what the children's languages look like. We agree that some of the tests we have used, especially the Verbal Expression and Grammatic Closure subtests of ITPA, are not very exciting for the children, and they emphasize the referential, non-personal use of language. But this use is required by the child at school. And at the same time as we, of course, hope that the schools will change to meet the linguistic and other needs of working class children, we are also interested in assessing how the children manage in the present school system today, for the children cannot wait until the schools have changed. We wanted to compare the children with monolingual children, because they live in a monolingual society, and they have to manage in that society, regardless of how fair we think it is to compare them with norms which do not reflect their reality (TSK: radical utopians can't afford to be romantic, they must be more realistic than realists, if they want their pluralistic Utopia to become true...).

School grades are not given on the basis of standardized tests, as CBP seems to think. Moreover, in the tests used in both our reports, all dialectal variants of Finnish are accepted, as well as those forms where spoken Finnish differs from the standard written forms. CBP says that Parker (1978, 54, ftn 9) "claims that

the conclusions drawn from the... research ignored the whole issue of the difference between the L1 variety spoken in the migrant community and the formal Finnish found on standardized tests" (p. 160). Parker does not "claim" it: she just puts it as a possible explanation, which she bases on a discussion with a Finnish professor of English. Prof. Sajavaara works with Finnish university students in Finland who are studying English at the university, and he does not know the tests concerned, neither has he had any contact with immigrant children and the type of language they use, (and he has never claimed such knowledge). Quite contrary to CBP's claim, the tests do accept the varieties spoken in both the immigrant communities and in corresponding social class milieux in Finland.

CBP supposes, for example, that the kinaesthetic subtest (which involves imitating the pronunciation of words) poses problems for the "testees who do not have these features in their linguistic repertoire because of the general tendency toward linguistic simplification in the direction of the D-language [D=dominant] attested to in contact varieties" (p. 160). For language groups with a phoneme inventory larger than the Swedish one (and different from it) this type of phenomenon has been observed in Sweden (in an ongoing study by Miodrag Stankowsky for Serbo-Croatian Yugoslav children, who lose those Serbo-Croatian phonemes that do not have corresponding phonemes in Swedish). But this does not hold true for the Finns. All the Finnish phonemes exist in Swedish (even if the allophones may be a bit different), but not vice versa. To "compensate" for its smaller phoneme inventory (21 phonemes) the Finnish language instead leans heavily on quantity, which is familiar for the children from Swedish, too.

We have compared the immigrant children with children from the lowest SES-groups in Finland, to avoid the class bias. If there are no contact varieties (except for some lexical interference, which did not play any part in the tests) and if all different varieties are accepted, then the children should be able to perform at the same level as monolingual children with the same class background, either in Finnish, or in Swedish, or both. If they don't, the reason must be either that it is impossible under the present immigrant conditions (and the Södertälje longitudinal study has shown that it is not impossible), or that there is something wrong with the education of immigrant children.

Conclusions

We agree completely with Christina Bratt Paulston, when she says that "it makes a lot more sense to assess U.S. bilingual education programs in terms of employment figures upon leaving school, statistics on drug addiction and alcoholism, suicide rates and personality disorders, i.e. indicators which measure the social pathology which accompanies social injustice rather than in terms of language skills" (1977, 100). According to all measures mentioned, and many more (see Skutnabb-Kangas 1979 for a summary), the results of the present immigrant education show a catastrophe, not only in Sweden, but even more so in the rest of the industrialized European countries:

> children and youngsters who do not know any language properly, whose school achievement is poor, and who, accordingly, can not get the kind of education they would deserve, rootless children with identity conflicts and a sense of marginality, many of them completely or functionally illiterate, and discriminated against, are going to have a hard time in Europe in the year 2000, and... they make up a third of the young population (in Europe). Those of them who succeed to get a job in the first place, are going to be forced to accept the same kind of jobs which their parents hold: the jobs which the majority population doesn't want to have. Dirty, heavy, dangerous, monotonous jobs, with difficult working hours and unpleasant working conditions - even if these jobs sometimes can pay well (Widgren 1975). The present educational system for immigrant children reproduces the immigrants' occupational structure and, especially, class structure. The school sees to it that the immigrant children are sorted out and left outside the higher education. Western societies will even in the future need non-qualified workers on the assembly lines, and they educate the immigrant children to meet that need.
>
> Skutnabb-Kangas 1978a, 230-231.

We do not see much difference in the present submersion programs for immigrant children, and the type of transitional programs which CBP suggests (and which immigrant parents in Sweden try to fight against): the goal in both is assimilation, even if in submersion programs it is directly admitted, and in the transitional programs only indirectly. We see it as contradictory that CBP speaks for the acceptance of the children's language and culture and at the same time advocates a school program, the very essence of which is that the children's language does not have any intrinsic value (it is only used as a bridge to the majority language instruction), and is not accepted.

Even if we do not know in detail what semilingualism implies (although the Scandinavian discussion has been very rewarding), we think that there is enough evidence to conclude that it is a real notion which has very little to do with middle class bias (conscious or unconscious). But we also know that it can be prevented with minority controlled language shelter programs, like the ones in Rock Point and in Södertälje.. Since it is easier to prevent than to cure afterwards, we think the existence of semilingualism is a fruitful null hypothesis until proven otherwise. A further theme for discussion is whether we should be satisfied if immigrant children do as well as native working class children, and what they together can do...

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